

Twenty-Four Interesting Ways* to use Google Earth in the Classroom

*and tips

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#1 - Look before you leap

View the location of a field trip in Google Earth before you actually visit.



Quentin D'Souza TeachingHacks.com

#2 - Embed Media

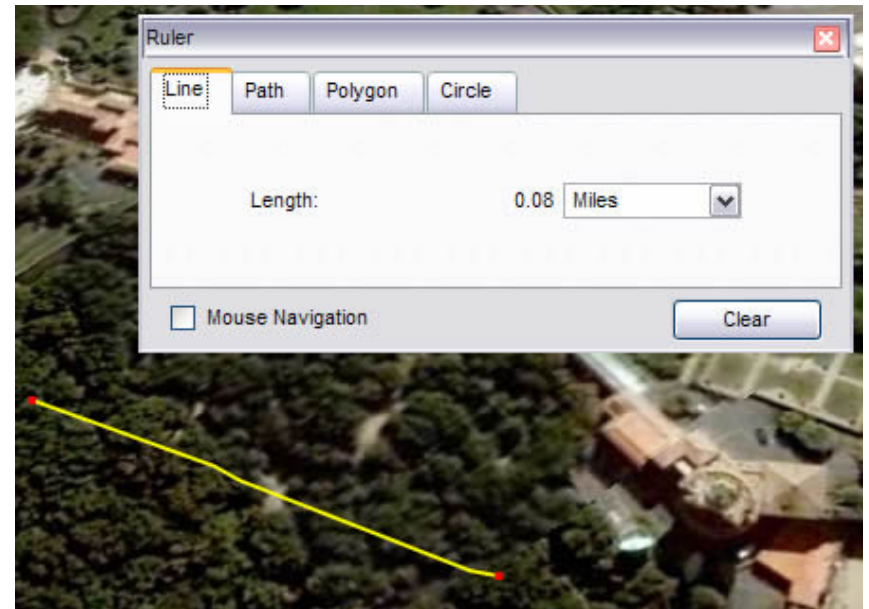
Embed media in Google Earth from web sites like Youtube, Voicethread and Slideshare by cutting and pasting the "embed code" into the description area of Placemarks, Paths, Polygons and Models.



Quentin D'Souza TeachingHacks.com

#3 - Line and Path

Use the Line and Path measurement tools to find distances that are challenging to measure.



#4 - Take it Slow, Enjoy the view!

Google Earth is fantastically visual and the kids love it when we quickly zoom back to Earth from afar. **But we are missing so much!**

I decided to slow things down. I basically changed the **Fly-To** speed settings, from the Tools menu>Options>Touring. I reduced the speed as much as I could using the slider.

Now with a much slower zoom you have the ability as a teacher to **reflect on what you see** - so if we are zooming in from space I am able to talk about the continents we can see and then countries and regions.

It just gives you and the kids much more time to take in the view!

#5 - Leaf colour changes in the UK

Use this KML data file of the leaf colour in the UK for your science lessons. Track the colour as it changes throughout the seasons.

It shows the leaf colour of major forests in and around the UK, the information is gathered from the [Forestry Commission sites](#) and converted into a data layer in Google Earth.

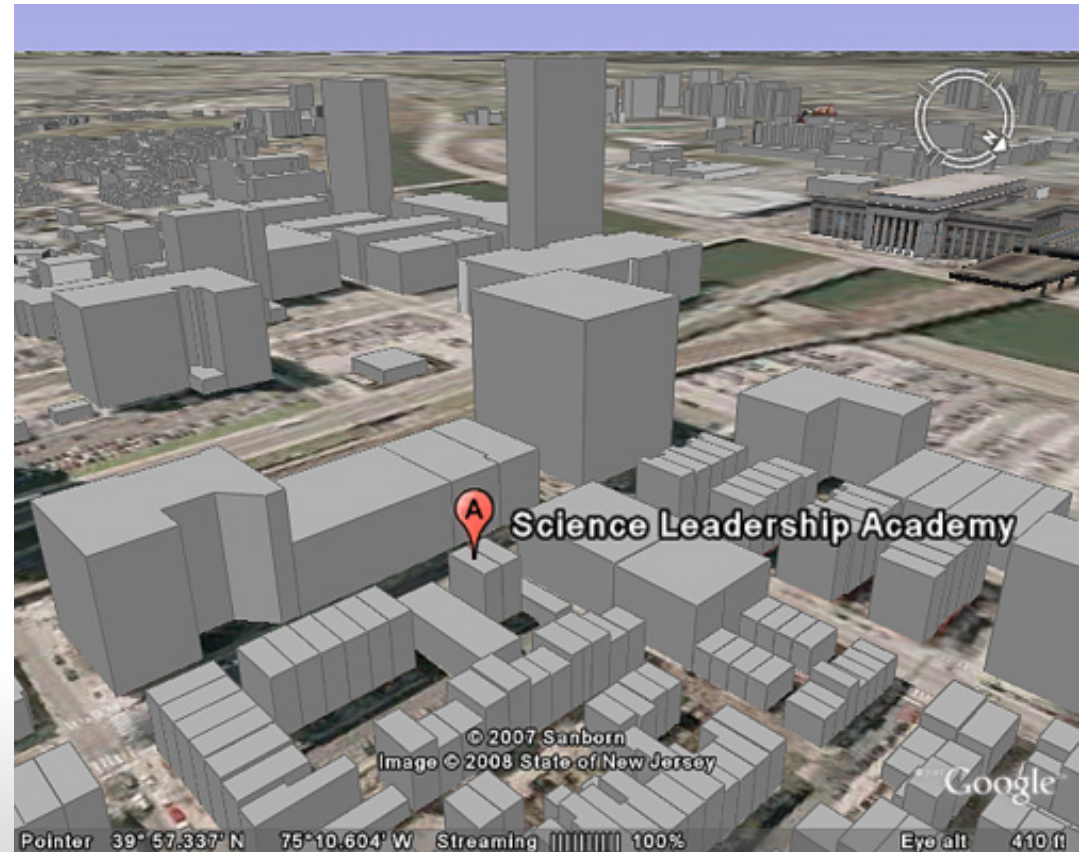


 [Open this Placemark](#)

#6 - City Planning and Construction

A great collaborative assignment would be to have students plan and construct the next great city in Google Earth. Find a massive area of undeveloped land within GE, and let the fun begin.

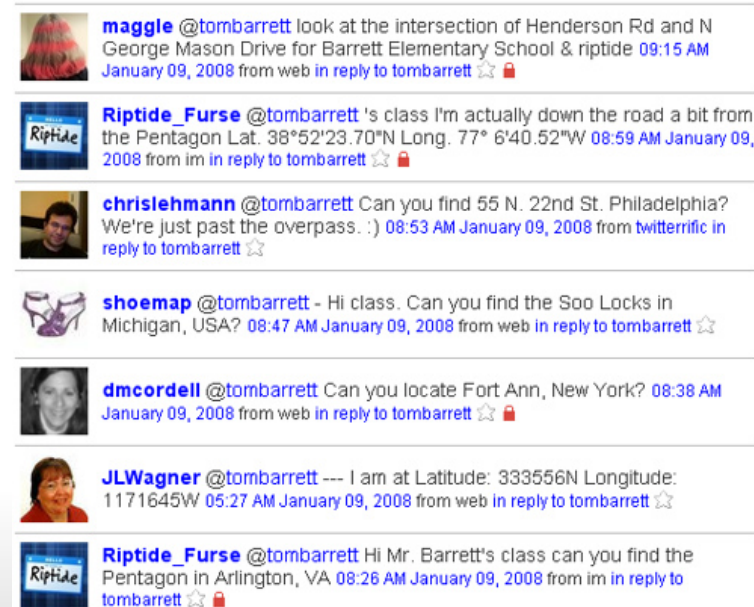
Students have to research city infrastructure, etc. Then, they would work together to develop the actual buildings and city layout using GE and Sketchup.



#7 - GeoTweets

Use a combination of Twitter and Google Earth as a unique mapping activity or intro to using GE.

- Ask your Twitter network for challenges, GeoTweets if you will. Do this in advance of the session to give people time to respond.
- Guide the children quietly - you want them to be explorers not tourists!
- Encourage the children to found out about the area of the GeoTweet - find proof - we found the name of the local garage for one!
- Tweet back the proof to the sender to say you have found them. Maybe ask a further question about the area.



#8 - Take a Virtual Drive

- Plan a trip with the class to any destination in the world
- Get driving directions, then click play
- Everyone gets to take the virtual drive, watching the scenery and interesting stops along the way.

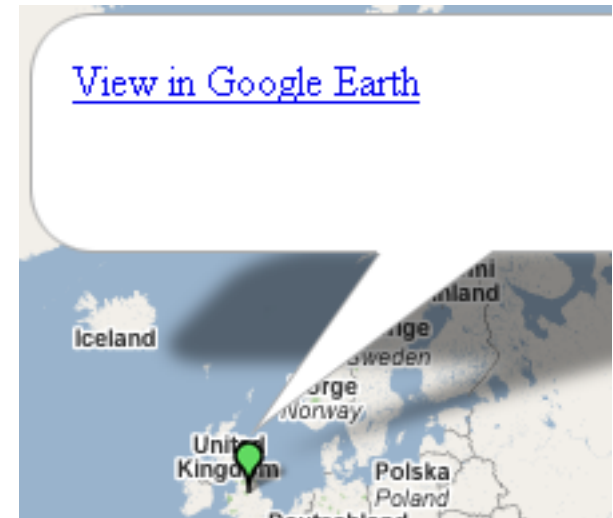
#9 - This is My Life

- Have students create a virtual autobiography
- They make placemarks at any location of significance then edit the placemarks to add stories, photos, videos, or URLs
- This can also be used to present research on a famous person

#10 - Find your blog visitors in Google Earth using Geovisitors

1. Grab a [Geovisitors badge](#) for your blog.
2. Click the link to see a map of your recent visitors.
3. Click on a placemark and you will see a balloon that gives you a link to "View in Google Earth"
4. Follow the link and it will open and zoom into that visitor's location in GE+add a placemark to "My Places". How cool is that!
5. Encourage your children to use this when they come into class to check your blog visitors - great way into using GE.

(Have GE already open when demonstrating as it will save time opening the app)



"I told you they would be excited..." ICT in my Classroom

#11 - Where are we today? Start the day with a "Wow!"

"I chose a city and zoomed down to street level, but so you could see a few square miles of the city.

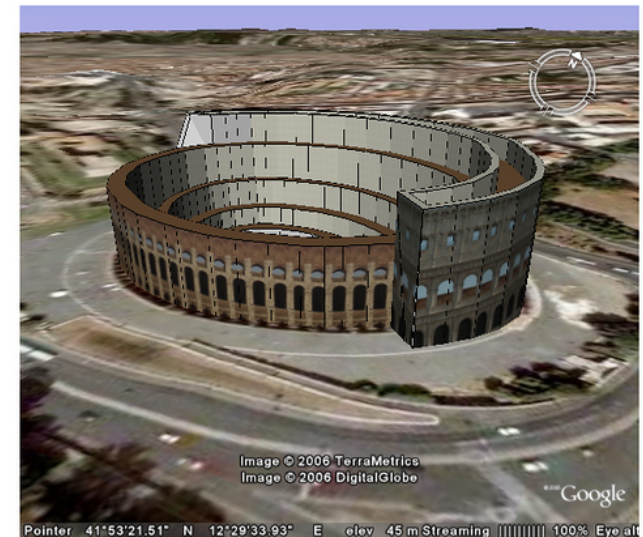
I then asked the children to guess where we were. I realised we could play a 10 questions type game - where they have only 10 questions to guess the name of the city. It was great fun and soon they were firing away with the questions.

1. Is it in the UK?
2. Is it in Australia?
3. Is it Athens?
4. Does the city have any famous buildings?

Wow! This last question blew me away for about 9.00am in the morning - so I answered, "Yes it has some very famous historic buildings you might know." Well it didn't take long for a couple of children to guess it was Rome."

I then zoomed out a little and switched on the 3D Buildings layer and we looked at the Colosseum. The children were enthralled as we panned and zoomed into the ancient structure. We even navigated so we were standing on one of the terraces of the great amphitheatre."

Taken from original post "[Google Earth: Where are we today?](#)"



#12 - Shakespeare's Globe

Are you studying the works of William Shakespeare in any of your classes?

If so than use GE as a way to introduce the famous playwright.

Visit Stratford upon Avon and find the house that he was born in.

Zoom over to the banks of the Thames, switch on the 3D building layer and load up the Globe Theatre model.

Explore the inside structure of the theatre, with some handy navigation you will even be able to see model actors on the famous stage!

Explore the Panoramio image layer to see

geotagged images of the surrounding area.



#13 - GeoTagged Shakespeare plays

A wonderful resource available on the Google Earth Community forum, created by [H21](#).

Described as: " 89 placemarks show almost all the places quoted in Shakespeare's plays.

For each place, the name of the play is noted with the number of the scene of the first appearance of the place.

Some places are in many plays, all are mentioned."

An excellent resource to further support the study of Shakespeare.



I love those little placemark icons too!

 [Open this placemark](#)

#14 - Easiest Way to Find KMZs for Google Earth

Go to www.google.com, click on ADVANCED SEARCH and under File Format choose KMZ before searching.

KMZ=Keyhole Markup Zipped, this is the "language" that GE accepts. After you find a KMZ, double-click and it will open in GE under Temporary Files. When you close GE, you will be asked if you would like to keep your "Temporary File", if you click yes, that KMZ will forever be in your GE unless you delete it.~~Cindy Lane, USA

Cross Curricular and Across the
K-12 World with Google Earth

www.googleearthgoods.pbwiki.com

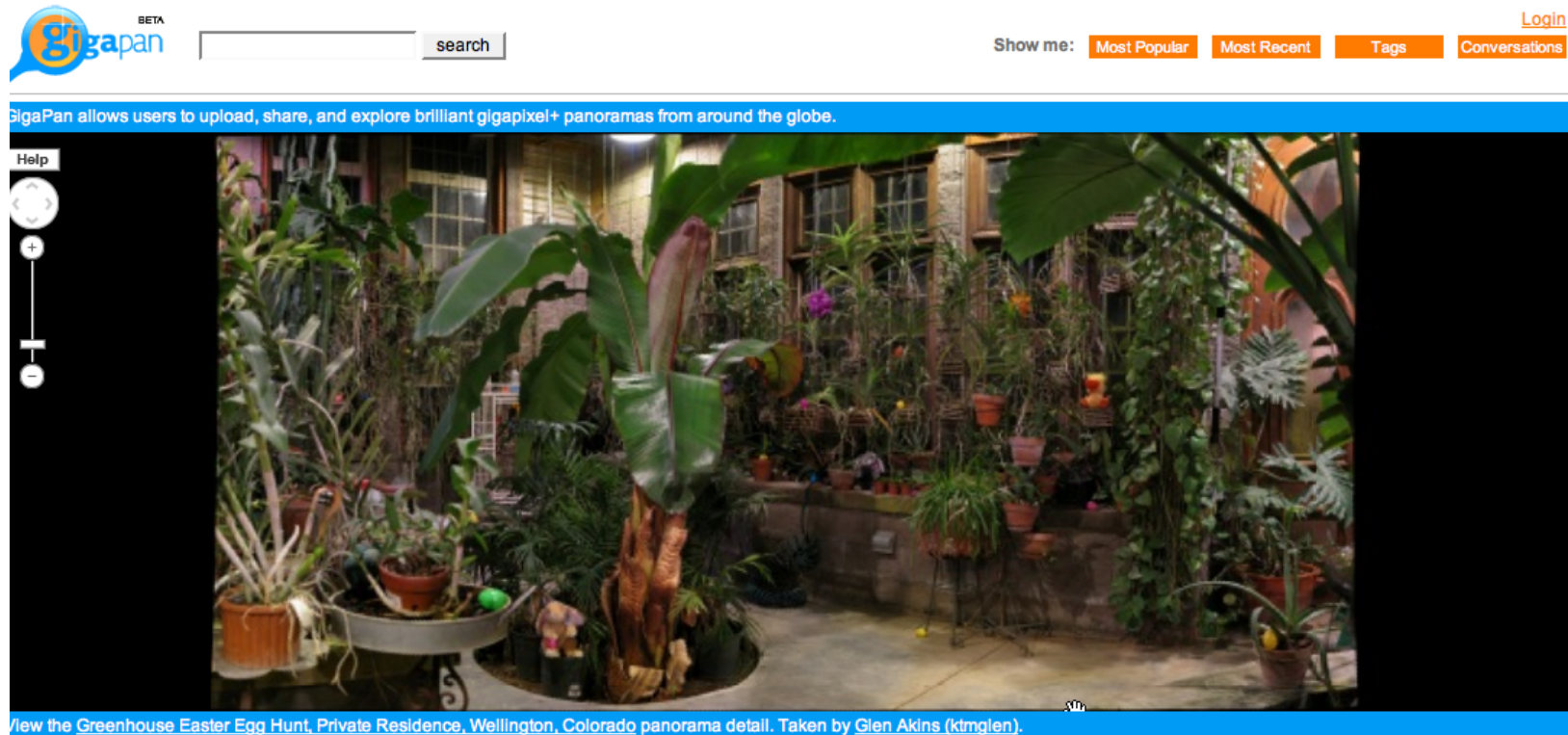
#15 - New Way to Show Spelling Words

www.geogreeting.com

After you show the spelling word, you can quiz the students on geography. For example, "*Are there more placemark / letters in North America or Europe*"?

You can also click on a specific letter and dive deeper into the location.

#16 - Use Gigapan for Panoramic KMLs



Go to Gigapan and search for a location. Next download the KML file. It goes straight to Google Earth. See gigapixel and panoramic views from around the globe~better yet, add your own images. So many places to see, so little time.

#17 - Take a Trip Through a Story

- The website [Google Lit Trips](#) has a series of KML files tied to stories.
- They are broken down by grade level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12, and higher ed).
- Download and run the associated file.
- It will appear in the Temporary Places folder.
- Drag the folder to My Places so it is easier to find when you restart GE.



- Follow the links in the folder, you may find images and extra background information in the file.

#18 - Travel Around the World with Books

Map each work your class reads to get a sense of the geography behind the literature. Then dive deeper to get a context for, for example, Things Fall Apart by looking at the images provided by Google Earth. Put all of the placemarks into one folder for a "Literary Journey" at the end by letting Google Earth fly all around your placemarks. End the year with an in-depth study of place as connected to meaning on a work of the student's choice.



A Geographical Look at a World Literature Course

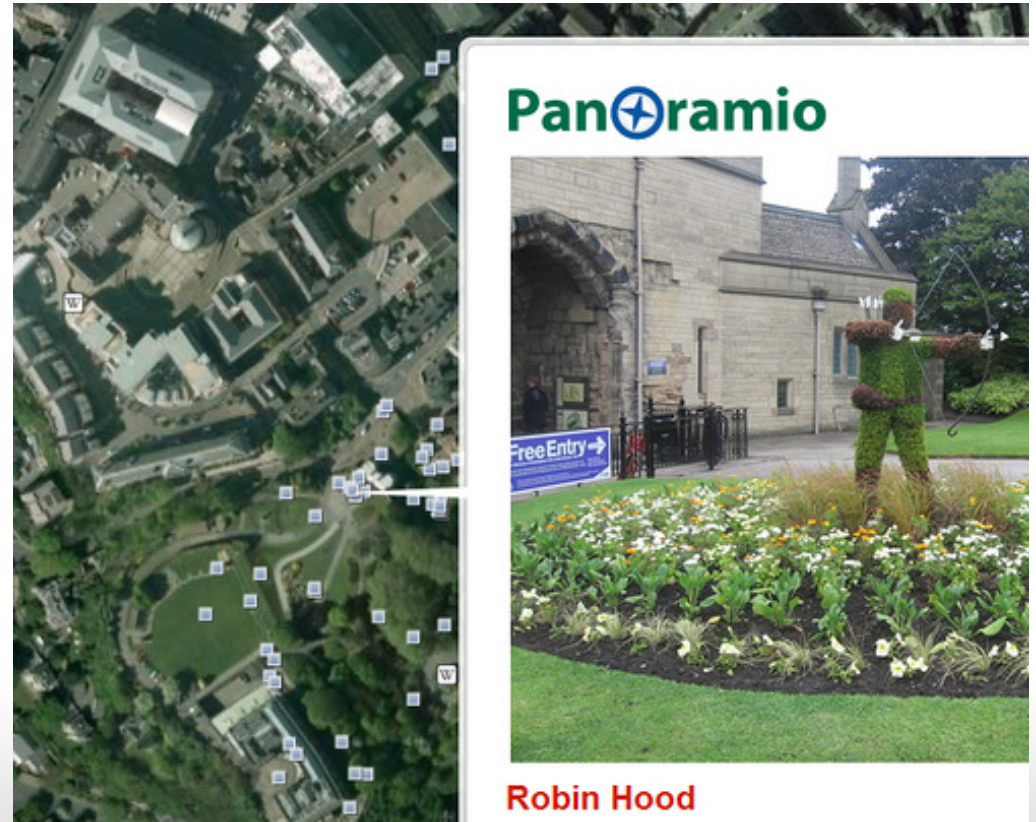
#19 - Research on location

Not everyone works best looking through web pages for information.

If your research has a location then navigate to it in Google Earth, add layers of information and conduct some research in 3D.

Try these layers of info:

- Wikipedia
- Panoramio
- GE community information
- 3D Buildings

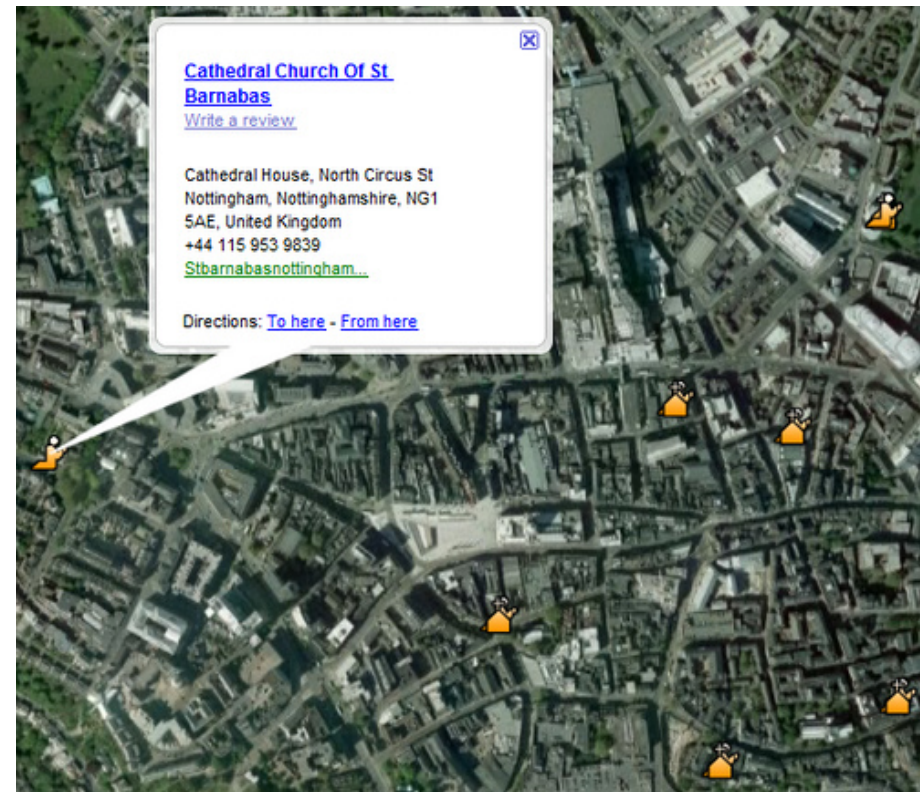


#20 - Places of Worship

We have been learning about the religions in our local area and exploring the different places of worship nearby.

In your PLACES list go to:

- >Places of Interest
- >Places of Worship (bottom of the list)



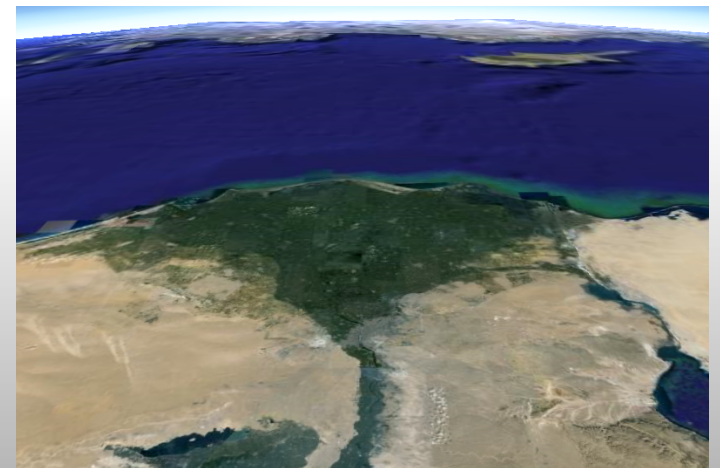
We used the information we found to help inform us of the main faiths in our community.

We compared this with other places in the UK to help give us a different perspective. We also discussed how this is only one source of information.

#21 - Environmental River Project

- Use Google for an **environmental river project**. Locate the origin of a river and then follow it to the mouth, entering the sea or lake.
- Use the altitude information on Google to calculate the difference in altitude between the origin and the mouth.
- Mark all geographical spots of interest (canyons, confluences, dams and weirs, cascades and waterfalls).
- Use the grid reference (gps co-ordinates) and the altitude information on Google to refer to these points of interest on the map.
- Zoom in along the banks and make notes of the various field types along the length of the river - does various field types (grassland, ploughed fields, forests, etc.) have an influence on the river: siltation, river course changing's, etc. eutrification.
- Which towns and cities lie next or near to the river and have an influence regarding and water extraction for households and industries. pollution
- After they complete this part, they could research the river to see the real effects and compare it to their notes and adjust as necessary.

Chris Smit



#22 - Digital Storytelling

The potential for location based stories being told in Google Earth placemarks is huge.

Begin with a journey that can be traced using the PATH tool and then add moments along the way that tell the tale.

Use the imagery to inspire you.

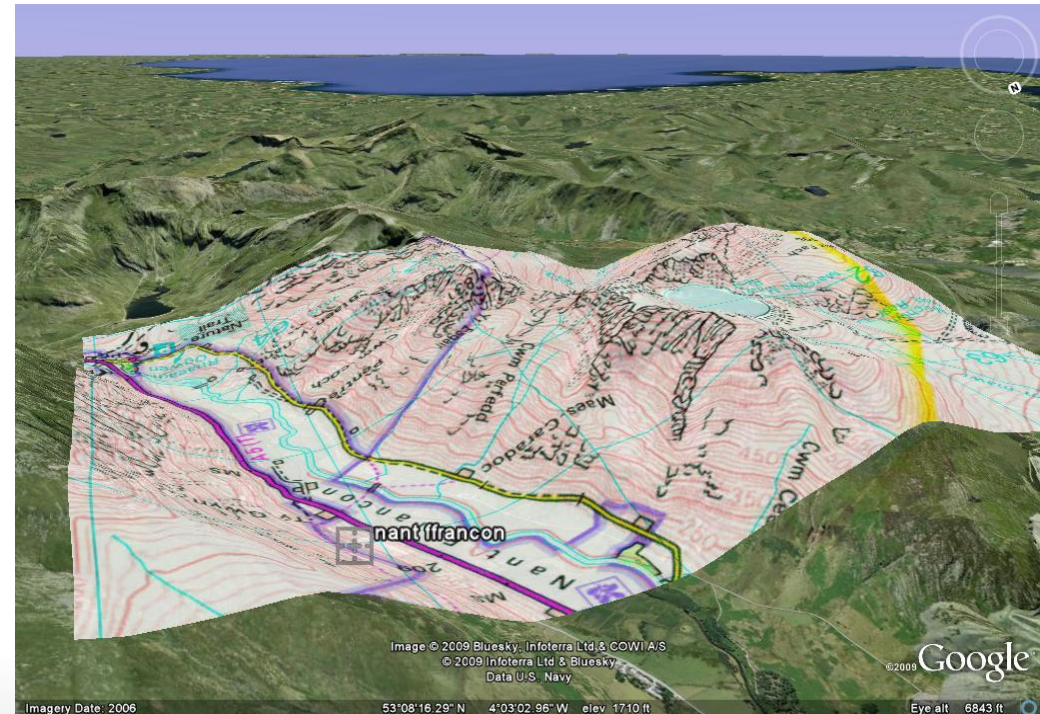
Embed audio and video of your children's reading or drama into the placemark to bring it to life even further.

See more "[Google Earth is Our Paper](#) "



#23 - Overlay contour maps

- Scan a contour map of an area, preferably mountainous.
- Navigate to the area on GE
- Use the tools/ image overlay option to insert the contour map over the area.
- The fiddly bit now is to overlay the map into the right area. Use the transparency slider on the left to help.
- Once it is in place it is great to show students what different landforms look like on a contour map.



#24 - Support Model Making

In my 12th grade American Government class, I assigned a fun project of doing dioramas of National Monuments. They made Mt. Rushmore (presidents heads), Statue of Liberty, S.F. trolley cars, Independence Hall, Lincoln Memorial, etc. At time of each one's presentation, we first "flew" over the location to get a relative perspective. We next went down to ground level to see how the real monument looked. The students works were really good, and GE really gave more meaning to the presentations.



Dave Osborn

If you would like to:

- Contribute your ideas and tips to the presentation.
- Let me know how you have used the resource.
- Get in touch.

You can email me or I am @tombarrett on

~~Twitter~~ If you ~~wrote~~ a tip (or even if you don't) please tweet about it and the link so more people can contribute.

I have created a page for all of the **Interesting Ways** presentations on my blog.

The whole family in one place :-)



Image: 'Sharing'

Thanks for helping
Tom Barrett

Have you seen Maths Maps
yet?